

Short reflection of the CSM on the event

**“The Right to Adequate Food. Promoting accountability of food security actions to the people most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition”**

24 January 2017

In recent years we have entered a period where the challenges of global governance have put negative pressure on realizing human rights legal obligations of states and to a large extent the UN system. These increasing pressures include the rise of xenophobic and nationalistic forces, increasing corporate power and influences within policy making processes at all levels, and the trends of natural resource use which undermine our sources of life, manifesting in climate change.

All states have the obligation to protect, respect, and fulfill human rights obligations. In the context of the Right to Adequate Food, the standards and policy outcomes developed in the Committee on World Food Security represent the international space for convergence and coherence on normative policies on food security and nutrition, where the CSOs representing and supporting those most affected by rights violations a seat at the policy table with governments.

In order to address contemporary challenges and opportunities of creating spaces and policies of accountability, within the context of the Committee on World Security, the Government of Norway and the Civil Society Mechanism jointly organized a seminar on 24 January in the FAO in Rome, entitled: “[The Right to Adequate Food Promoting accountability of food security actions to the people most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition](#)”. This event sought to discuss the key questions of: What is the Role of the Right to Adequate food in CFS, 20 years after the World Food Summit? Why is accountability to affected populations important for the Right to Adequate Food of the people most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition, and how does it operate in practice? Why is the right to adequate food and accountability to affected populations important on the country level?

The event opened with keynote presentations by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein (video message), UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Food Hilal Elver (video message), and former UN Special Rapporteur Olivier DeSchutter. These important presentations made clear the need to shift stronger focus to ESC rights generally the RtFN specifically, shedding light on the unfortunate dissonance between strong national legal frameworks and implementation on the ground. However, at the same time, there is a clear call from communities to push for human rights coherence from the ground up with new mechanisms for participation and accountability being implemented and designed by community groups and local government.

The main seminar also included panel discussions with CSOs, representatives from the Rome Based Agencies, and member state government representatives (full program can be seen [here](#)) which shed light on the various strategies and understanding of accountability for the RtFN. From the discussions, it is clear that the CFS plays a fundamental role in creating a space for policy convergence and for further developing the RtFN, evidenced through past successes and standard setting documents such as the Right to Food Guidelines and the Tenure Guidelines. However, the CFS is a space which still has challenges, as we are still seeking to understand accountability within a multi-stakeholder environment, which risks to place all actors as having the same roles and responsibilities, potentially diluting the legal obligations of states. Additionally, as we move forward to develop an innovative mechanisms for monitoring CFS policy outcomes at national, regional and global level, it is fundamental to keep the focus

on a normative framework, rather than a solely results based framework which is the common direction in many policy spheres with the rise of the “data revolution.”

The strength of the CFS lies in the ability to put people and communities at the center of decision making, and create relationships and discussion amongst those who govern and those who can support the implementation (RBAs). When actions and policies are guided by concept of accountability and human rights, it strengthens and maintains the special character and role of the CFS space, provides a space for human rights coherence, including and especially the rights of women, and creates policies that centralizes human dignity.

Follow up: This half day event was an important signal of the importance of the political and institutional will to move forward on these UN charter commitments and obligations of states. To continue the momentum from this meeting, there are clear entry points into implementing human rights coherence in the CFS monitoring process, and carrying out the thematic monitoring events at national, regional and global level. In particular, the Monitoring working group has begun discussing the schedule for monitoring which includes the possibility of the Right to Food Guidelines; this would be an important step in creating a stronger analysis of how to better realize human rights commitments, and provide a space for states to share their views. Additionally, during the discussions, a concrete suggestion was put forward of creating an informal “Friends of the Right to Food” group which can seek to strategize and make proposal towards greater human rights coherence in policy making. This proposal will be followed up with the member state representatives that took part in the meeting.